

## Panama City Pilot

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PANAMA CITY, FLA., DEC. 19, 1907.

### Panama City as a Cotton Port.

Upwards of three million bales of cotton were raised in the states of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida this year. At \$50 per bale of 500 pounds this would amount to over \$150,000,000.

The Atlanta & St Andrews Bay R. R. with its numerous connections, and its extension to Opelika, bisects the richest portion of the cotton belt of Alabama, and gives a near tidewater port for that of western Georgia.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that at least one tenth of this crop will as fibre or manufactured goods pass through this, its nearest and most convenient port, just so soon as this harbor is opened up to the world's commerce.

This would mean that cotton to the value of \$1,589,000 would be moved to and shipped from here, or much more than that in value, if as will be the case, a portion of it were in manufactured goods.

It must be borne in mind that this port is at least 100 miles nearer the Florida straits, and the Panama Canal, than any other on the north gulf coast from which this cotton could be shipped. The railroads being constructed to this point have a minimum of grades, and that little favoring outbound traffic. They can and will handle the amount of cotton and its products that we have stated, and we firmly believe much more.

### Railway Freight Service.

Interstate Commerce Comr. F. K. Lane in a recent interview published in the New York Sun speaking upon railway matters says: "The great railroad problem is not one of rates, but of service." The error has repeatedly made a similar statement. While there have been many just complaints by shippers, of indefensible freight rates, yet the masses are not complaining of the slight additional cost to them growing out of an alleged high rate. The hue and cry over exorbitant freight rates is purely demagogical. It is void of sincerity or honesty.

The man who pays the freight, the farmer, laborer and mechanic, receives no benefit by lowering the rates a few or many cents per hundred. The merchandise, provisions, or clothing he buys, are not materially affected by the freight rate thereon. The merchant who does the buying and selling already sufficiently prosperous might be slightly benefited, but not the masses.

But the latter are most seriously affected, as in this locality at present by the impossibility, of getting sustenance for man or beast, owing to the railways not being able to furnish sufficient cars, or the power to move them, to handle the grain and feed stuffs from the grower or manufacturer to the consignee at Gulf ports, from whence our local merchants secure their supplies.

As an instance: though grain and feed stuffs are now plentiful and lower than for some time in the markets, yet the consumer here is obliged to pay from 10 to 25 cents per 100 pounds more than the customary price, owing to the impossibility of supplying the demand, on account of the car famine.

Such facts, as well as delays to other shipments and losses thereon, and abusive treatment of their patrons by some of the railway officials, is what causes the masses to cry out against railroads. Commissioner Lane in the same interview stated that the Commission received five times as many complaints of inability to get cars, or slowness of movement of loaded cars, as of rates charged, and this notwithstanding that the Commission has no jurisdiction over operating.

Public conditions favorable to the roads will not be made possible until the causes that produce the trouble are done away with. The demands of the people are becoming more insistent. Panics do not check or alter them. Neither do political platitudes or a multiplicity of spoken or written words affect them. The long suffering masses are in the saddle and they are there to stay until there is a change for the better in the methods of the offending roads as regards supplying legitimate demands and in giving such fair and just treatment as is due from man to man.

## Improvement of St Andrews Bay

The PILOT trusts that its readers have, as far as is in their power, complied with the request of the War Department to furnish information relative to the necessity of improving the entrance of this harbor. It is the first time the authorities have asked for such information, and to fail to supply it now, or grudgingly assent to doing so, would not only injure the entire Bay country, but would withhold from the immense territory that is soon to seek this bay as their tidewater port, such help as is now due them.

If you cannot furnish the Board any facts that will aid them in a solution of the question, it is possible you may be able to influence some one who can, which would be just as serviceable and loyal an act. As the PILOT has heretofore stated, there is no one that has not some influence, and to exert it now in this cause means much for the future of this magnificent harbor; and to those portions of three states that are looking to this gateway of commerce for relief. Below will be found a letter written the Board by G. M. West, President and General Manager, of the Panama City Publishing Company.

OFFICE OF PANAMA CITY PUBLISHING COMPANY,  
PANAMA CITY, FLA., December 14th, 1907.

To the Honorable Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors,  
Rooms 507-510, Colorado Building, Washington, D. C.

GENTLEMEN:

I am in receipt of a copy of a letter from Capt H. B. Ferguson, Montgomery, Ala., of the Corps of Engineers, inviting submission before your Board, of statements and arguments explaining the commercial conditions which in my opinion necessitate and justify the improvement of St Andrews Bay, by the U. S. Government at this time.

In accordance with such request I would most respectfully submit the following statement, also call your attention to marked copies of the Panama City PILOT, herewith enclosed. These contain further, and possibly more definite information concerning this matter.

Naturally the subject falls into two sections: 1st, the business of St Andrews Bay. 2nd, that business which because of its nearness to tide-water, and railway facilities, will come here from the territory north, northeast, and northwest, of this harbor.

First as to the business of St Andrews Bay. It is only within the past few years that the lumber and naval stores business of this locality began to receive the attention of mill men and naval stores operators. Since then there have been located upon this bay two large saw mills with a working capacity of 100,000 feet each per day, and two smaller mills. The large mills cut for export only. The combined cut of these four mills will aggregate 65 million feet per year, with a value of about \$1,170,000.00.

As virtually all of this lumber is exported, it has to be towed to Pensacola on barges, at a cost of \$2.50 per thousand, or a total freight for the cut of the four mills when running at their full capacity of \$150,000.00 annually. Two thirds of this sum could be saved to the manufacturers and this section, were large vessels able to come into this harbor, instead of the lumber having to be shipped to Pensacola.

The standing pine contiguous to this bay is estimated at 1,200,000 acres. The mill companies now operating here own but a small part of this immense acreage. The balance is being held until the deepening of the harbor entrance permit shipments direct from the mills that will then be erected. The saving in freight that would thus accrue being of itself a good profit. (See PILOT of Oct 3rd, 1907.)

All of this timber is rich in naval stores and will undoubtedly be thus utilized before it is cut. At present there are upon this bay 19 stills making the total valuation of which is \$661,950.00. This industry is also in its infancy, its further development awaiting better transportation facilities. At present it is all taken from here by small vessels to Pensacola and elsewhere. (See PILOT of Oct 3rd, 1907.)

The fishing industry though not yet of great importance is worthy of attention. There are now about 275 men engaged therein, with 40 schooners, sail boats, and launches, the catch amounting to about 7,500 barrels of fish, and 2,500 barrels of oysters annually, totaling in value at present prices \$60,000.00. (See PILOT of Sept 12th, 1907.)

There is now a thriving and rapidly increasing agricultural community upon the shores of the bay, and in the adjacent country, aggregating some thousands of people, but agricultural productions are as yet too small in quantity to be taken into account in the matter of water transportation.

There are also several villages of importance upon the shores of St Andrews Bay among which named in order of population are Millville, Southport, St Andrew, Panama City, Parker, Cromanton, and Farmdale. There are fifteen post offices. The mercantile business of these villages is of considerable importance both as to tonnage and value, while this whole section furnishes a large passenger traffic in and out of this harbor, which would be greatly increased could larger boats pass over the bar. There are also upwards of 80 launches upon this bay.

Summarized the present business of the three important industries are as follows:

Lumber.....	\$1,170,000.00
Naval Stores.....	661,950.00
Fish and Oysters.....	60,000.00

Total.....\$1,861,950.00

Secondly; relative to that important section of the Lower South, to which the improvement of this port will afford the most direct and economical shipping facilities by water. With the deepening of the channel at the entrance to St Andrews Bay this will be the safest, deepest, and most extensive harbor on the South East Atlantic or Gulf Coast. It will therefore without question become the port of import and export for all that section of country, which, through railway transportation and lessened freights, is naturally tributary to this point. This will include, upon the completion of the Atlanta & St Andrews Bay R. R., (to be done within the next 90 days,) with its connections, a section of country 200 miles East and West, by 250 miles North and South, or from the Flint River in Georgia with such important cities as Bainbridge, Albany, Americus and Oglethorpe on the East, to such a point on the West as would meet an equal haul to tide water at Pensacola, Fla., over the Louisville & Nashville R. R. This would be somewhere east of Montgomery, Ala., and would include on its western borders the cities of Geneva, Florala, Elba, and Troy, Alabama. (See PILOT of June 13th, 1907.)

Described by counties the territory naturally tributary to this port includes the following: Washington, Jackson, Holmes, and Walton, in West Florida; Henry, Geneva, Coffee, Dale, Pike, Barbour, Bullock, Russell, Macon, and Lee, Alabama; Miller, Early, Baker, Dougherty, Calhoun, Clay, Randolph, Terrell, Lee, Quitman, Sumter, Webster and Stewart, Georgia. The above counties, especially those in Alabama and Georgia, are noted for the very large amount of cotton produced, all of which is now hauled to the sea coast at Savannah, Fernandina, Brunswick, Mobile or Pensacola, at a cost for freight far above what it will be when sent by rail here, the distance to this port being in many cases less than one half that which the traffic now has to bear.

In the sections referred to there are also many cotton factories whose output will seek this point of export. The productions of other classes of manufactures will also come here, and the owners of the millions of acres of pine in the lower sections of these states will make this their port for foreign shipments, as it will give them in the matter of reduced rail freights a profit on their business not now realized. At present many mills in the section referred to are barely existing owing to the distance and cost of transportation to tide water.

Inbound there will be a great saving to the agricultural districts mentioned, on fertilizers, and other commodities of daily use, brought in by water through this port, and a short rail haul to destination. This alone will save these counties hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly.

Besides the road already now being completed, the Birmingham, Columbus & St Andrews Bay R. R. is now being constructed from Chipley to this point, and at present progress will reach here next summer. With its proposed extension northwesterly this will add still more to the territory tributary to this port. In this connection it is but right to state that roads have been chartered, and some preliminary work done thereon in way of surveys, from Bainbridge, Ga., to this bay; from Savannah, Ga., to this point; and from Columbus, Ga., to connect with roads already nearing here. The capitalists behind these projects but await a return to normal financial conditions to resume active work.

The commercial necessities of this vast territory are too well known, and a matter of record to require a detailed statement. The section comprises much of the best cotton land of the south, and on its southern boundaries has the largest portion of the remaining uncut long leaf yellow pine in the Lower South. It is developing in population and wealth at a very rapid rate; its requirements for transportation facilities have already outgrown the possibilities of the railways to care for the same; and the opening of this port, with the completion of railways to this point, offers a solution, and the only one, for this congested condition of commerce. It is the hope and prayer of the hundreds of thousands of people residing in these wealthy, growing, and important sections of these States, that the Government will take immediate steps to aid them in a matter so vitally important to their present and future welfare.

Very respectfully yours,

G. M. WEST.

President.

### The Christian Christmas.

From an excellent article upon Christmas in McClures for December, by Henry J. Markland, we extract the following relative to the influence on Yuletide caused by the advent of Christianity.

"When Christianity first made its influence felt in Italy, and, later, over the entire world, it took these heathen rites and ceremonies and consecrated them to its own beneficent and noble ends. The old festival of the winter solstice had been meant to mark the beginning of a new life for the material world. It was now to mark and glorify the opening of a new life of the spirit.

From the first, the Western or Roman Church commemorated the birth of Christ during the last week of each December. The Eastern or Greek Church, for a while, had no fixed date for this observance; but Pope Julius I (337-352) convoked a body of the most learned men of both great churches, and they declared December 25 to be the natal day of the Saviour. It was the day, as has been said, of the Jewish Feast of Lights; and it now, by slow degrees, combined all the most striking customs of the different races in their welcome to the turning sun.

Common to all were the Christmas candles, bonfires, and torches, now symbolizing the Light of the World. From the Northmen came the great Yule logs. From the Druids came the sprays of pine and evergreen, the mistletoe, and the holly; while the huge sirloin of beef, which was once a part of England's Christmas merry-making, recalls the Druidical sacrifice of bulls. From the Romans came the joyous salutation, "Merry Christmas" (*Io Saturnalia*), the exchange of gifts, the feasting, and the Christmas carols; for these last were written and first sung together with the so-called "manger-songs," to take the place of hymns to heathen gods. The so-called "mummeries" which developed into the "masques" of the sixteenth century were a reminiscence of the travesties in which the Roman slaves indulged. The Egyptian mysticism was recalled in the fact that our Christmas is, before all else, a holiday and festival for children.

Some of the coarser features of the Roman Saturnalia died hard, although they finally became innocuously absurd. The practise of the slaves in burlesquing their masters and in travesty the officials of the state, crops up in the practise of certain churches which had a peculiar ritual of their own. After mass had been celebrated, the priest would turn to

his congregation and bray three times. The people brayed responsively, and then flocked into the chancel where they elected a Pope of Nonsense, a Cardinal of Folly, an Abbot of Unreason, and other burlesque dignitaries. Then began a mock service, in which the vestments were worn inside out, the missals and breviaries turned upside down, and the prayers said backwards.

In France and England the Christmas revels of the gentry long resembled the Saturnalian banquets of the wealthy Romans. The "king" of the latter appears as the Lord of Misrule among the former; and the wild license of heathenism long endured in Christian lands.

Yet in the end, the church, in the ideals of humanity, swept away those lingering traces of excess which still survived. In nothing else is the continuing, persistent influence of Christianity more surely illustrated than in its transformation of the Christmas before Christ into the Christmas which is Christ's alone. The superstition of the Egyptians, the savagery of the Northern peoples, the frantic and bloody practices of the Druids, and the grossness of the Romans, have all been purified and touched, as it were, with grace and beauty; so that there remains a festival of harmless mirth, of light and color, of song and melody, of good-will and of peace, and through it all the happy innocence of children's laughter."

Panama City Church Directory.

M. E. Church South; Rev. E. W. Roberts; Preaching second Sunday in each month at 4 p. m.; on the fourth Sunday in each month at 11 a. m.

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